



Chicago Virtual Charter School Board of Directors Announces City's First K-8 Online Public School

July 13, 2006

The Chicago Virtual Charter School to use a "blended school" education model where students will learn part-time at a learning center located downtown; school is open to 600 Chicago kids in grades K-8.

Chicago, IL – Families across Chicago now have access to a new high quality public school option for their kids with the announcement of the Chicago Virtual Charter School (CVCS) — the city's first K-8 online public school. CVCS is one of a number of new public schools created as part of the Chicago Public Schools Renaissance 2010 initiative.

CVCS families, teachers, and administrators, along with members the CVCS Board of Directors, gathered today in Chicago to introduce the new public school. CVCS students and teachers also conducted lesson demonstrations to show how the online school program will utilize powerful technology and a comprehensive, standards-based curriculum to deliver education to students' homes across the city.

The Chicago Virtual Charter School (www.chicagovcs.org), which will serve students in grades K-8, is accepting enrollments from new students, hosting numerous parent information sessions throughout the city, and hiring NCLB Highly Qualified teachers who are certified in the state of Illinois. CVCS will begin its first year this September.

The Chicago Virtual Charter School will be unique to other public virtual school programs because it will utilize two types of learning environments – virtual and brick-and-mortar. In this innovative "blended school" model, CVCS students will participate in traditional classroom instruction with CVCS teachers at a downtown learning center at least one day a week, while students who need remedial instruction can use the learning center to receive additional academic support.

The CVCS learning center will be equipped the latest state-of-the-art technology and education tools, including computers, high-tech and interactive whiteboards, projectors, high-speed wireless Internet, and classroom science equipment. CVCS teachers will primarily teach science classes for all the students, using a customized science classroom learning program developed by K12 that features video, flash animation, and dynamic web-based simulations, in addition to exciting hands-on science experiments.

For students who are behind in math, reading and writing, CVCS teachers will use the learning center to provide additional academic workshops and tutoring focused on the individual needs of each student. These remedial classes will be aimed at improving students' knowledge and understanding of critical concepts so they can advance to their appropriate grade level.

The Chicago Virtual Charter School is governed by an independent, non-profit Board of Directors made up of Chicago residents.

"The Board is extremely excited that the Chicago Virtual Charter School is now an option for families across our city," said Leslie Contos, President of the CVCS Board of Directors and lifelong resident of Chicago. "This is a school option that we believe will help many children who have education needs that are better met outside the traditional school building, and who benefit from a more individualized approach to learning."

Contos added, "We're grateful to the Board of Education of Chicago Public Schools for granting the charter to our school as part of the Renaissance 2010 initiative. We look forward to working in partnership with Chicago Public Schools to help serve the kids and families in our city."

Sharon Hayes, an experienced educator who served 29 years in Chicago public schools as a teacher and principal, will serve as the Head of School for the Chicago Virtual Charter School.

"I've learned during my years serving in public schools that when parents, teachers, and administrators work in a true partnership, the children always win," said Hayes. "This is why I'm excited to lead a school that is dedicated to building personal relationships with students and partnerships with families. Our focus will be on academic achievement and student success."

Students who enroll in CVCS will have access to the exciting K12 curriculum, which is widely recognized as the highest quality and most innovative learning program used in online public schools across the country.

Led by K12 Chief Learning Officer, Dr. Bror Saxberg, and a team of education experts, K12 developed a comprehensive, rigorous,

standards-based learning program that incorporates the best materials and methods of instruction.

The curriculum challenges the student and gives them a solid education foundation by introducing them at an early age to critical scientific concepts, fundamental mathematical skills, problem solving, critical thinking, reading comprehension, and a love for learning. The K12 program continuously builds on the base of knowledge acquired by the student through a “mastery-based” approach of instruction and assessment to ensure every student fully understands the concepts of every lesson before moving on through the learning program.

More on the Chicago Virtual Charter School:

The Chicago Virtual Charter School is a citywide online public school that will serve up to 600 students in grades K-8. Children who reside in Chicago are eligible to enroll.

CVCS students work with the assistance of a parent or other responsible adult. Parents are active participants in their child's education, guiding them through lessons as needed, and developing a close working relationship with their child's teacher.

Students who enroll in CVCS receive access to the complete K12 learning program, including a computer system, high-speed Internet connection, the K12 Online School, lessons, assessments, books, materials, planning and progress tools, the CVCS school community, and much more.

Every student in CVCS is assigned to an Illinois-certified public school teacher. CVCS teachers work in partnership with the parents to build an academic program using the K12 curriculum that best meets the learning style and needs of each student. Teachers work remotely, providing instruction, guidance and support. Teachers review work, help design learning plans, and communicate with students regularly through e-mail, phone conferences and academic workshops. Teachers also coordinate a variety of academic and social outings.

CVCS will use a "blended school" education model. CVCS will have a learning center located in downtown Chicago where students will participate in traditional classroom instruction with CVCS teachers at least one day a week. Students who need remedial instruction will also use the learning center to receive additional academic support.

Students in CVCS must meet all academic and attendance requirements, just like students in other Chicago public schools. CVCS students are required to complete five hours a day (900 a year), five days a week of instructional time working through the curriculum.

CVCS students will take the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), and students with limited English proficiency will be measured in the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE). Additionally, students in grades 3-8 will take the math and reading Scantron Performance Series for diagnostic purposes; results are used to customize each student's learning plan.

CVCS is chartered through the Chicago Public Schools. As with all CPS-approved charter schools in this past year, CVCS is pending certification with the Illinois State Board of Education. There is no cost for students to enroll in the school.

More information on CVCS can be found at www.chicagovcs.org.

About K12 Inc.

K12 Inc. is a leading provider of high quality education programs and academic services. K12 has developed a comprehensive, research-based learning program in traditional subjects, including curriculum, tools, materials and an innovative lesson delivery system. The K12 core curriculum covers the subjects of English/Language Arts, Math, Science, History, Art, and Music.

Central to the K12 learning program is the Online School (OLS), which hosts over 10,000 interactive, engaging and comprehensive lessons presented in a mix of printed and multimedia forms. The Online School also includes lesson assessments, planning and progress tools, and an attendance tracking system to determine the number of instructional hours completed by the student.

The K12 learning program is used by over 20,000 students across the country in a variety of public school settings, including traditional classrooms, public virtual (online) schools, and in other education programs. There are currently 14 states and three major cities (Chicago, Houston, and Washington, DC) with public virtual schools that use the K12 curriculum. Online public schools that use the K12 learning program regularly outperform other online schools.

More information on K12 can be found at www.K12.com